

**Blue Ridge Parkway  
Environmental Assessment Information Guide  
For Rights-of-Way**



**Prepared by**

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## **Blue Ridge Parkway Environmental Assessment Information Guide For Rights-of-Way**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Blue Ridge Parkway has the legal authority under 16 U.S.C. 5 and 16 U.S.C. 79, as delegated, to grant an easement for a right-of-way to cross Blue Ridge Parkway administered lands for a period not exceeding 50 years provided that the right-of-way is not inconsistent with the use of such lands for Parkway purposes.

Each right-of-way application must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470[f]) (NHPA), and National Park Service Management Policies and Guidelines. Although many right-of-way proposals can be categorically excluded from NEPA, many still require the development of an environmental assessment. National Park Service guidelines for compliance with NEPA recommend that an environmental assessment be prepared in certain situations, including projects that involve a high level of public interest or controversy. This analysis further serves to fulfill NPS responsibilities for coordination under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Lastly, and perhaps most important of all, this environmental assessment process is intended to facilitate a sound and reasoned decision, based upon consideration of all relevant known factors.

Rights-of-way are categorically excluded from NEPA if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

*...overhead utility lines to an individual building or well from an existing line where installation will not result in significant visual intrusion and will involve no clearance of vegetation other than for placement of poles,*

*...minor overhead utility lines not involving placement of poles or towers and not involving vegetation management or significant visual intrusion in an NPS-administered area,*

*...underground utilities in areas showing clear evidence of recent human disturbance or areas within an existing road prism or within an existing overhead utility right-of-way, and*

*if ground disturbing activities do not impact archeological resources.*

The purpose of the environmental assessment is to evaluate the environmental consequences of granting rights-of-way for utility lines, including water, sewer, electric, phone, TV cable, and wireless communication facilities when they do not meet the categorical exclusions listed above. There is a list of mandatory criteria that must be looked at to determine the effects of the proposed project and must be included in the EA as an appendix. (Appendix 1-Blue Ridge Parkway Environmental Screening Form)

## GENERAL

To prepare an environmental assessment that addresses the right-of-way application when categorical exclusions are not appropriate, the applicant is required to:

- (1) to conduct biological and cultural surveys using NPS approved professionals,**
- (2) to consult with state and federal regulatory agencies to determine impacts,**
- (3) to obtain necessary Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) permit if the applicant is not working under the authority of the federal government, and**
- (4) to provide proof of all consultations, and**
- (5) to make EA available to public for review and comment.**

An EA should briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or an Environmental Impact Statement.

The length of an EA will depend on the number of alternatives being presented, complexity of issues being addressed, and consequences being analyzed. The discussion of resources that would be affected should be kept brief, and the length of all other discussion proportionate to the seriousness of the impact. The document should normally vary from a few pages on a simple project, to no more than 20 – 30 pages on complex projects. The use of maps, graphics, tables, comparative summaries, and incorporation of reference of other documents, when appropriate, should substantially reduce the need for lengthy descriptions. A well-done environmental assessment offers several reasonable options for resolving problems or fulfilling needs, which gave, rise to the proposal initially, yet minimize or mitigate impacts to environmental resources.

The applicant/consultants will be expected to meet with appropriate Blue Ridge Parkway Resource Planning and Natural Resource Staff during the project scoping phase on-site, before initiating the preparation of the EA, and to gain approval of the proposed range of alternatives to be presented and evaluated by the applicant. You must record evidence of the site visit and agency communication in your assessment. The park staff will review the document, work with the applicant to revise, and periodically confirm consultations.

If you have any questions in regard to the right-of-way application, or are ready to meet on the preparation of the EA, please contact David Anderson, Landscape Architect/ROW Specialist at 828/271-4779 ext. 217 or Suzette Ramsey, Environmental Compliance Specialist at 828/271-4779 ext. 219.

The purpose of this document is to set forth the guidelines and procedures by which the applicant will comply with NEPA, NPS and BLRI requirements. NEPA requires all federal agencies to prepare in-depth studies of the impacts of and alternatives to a proposal with the potential to affect the environment, use the information contained in such studies in deciding whether to proceed with the actions, and diligently attempt to involve the interested and affected public before any decision is made. NPS management decisions will be based on full and proper technical and scientific studies appropriate to the decisions made.

## **FORMAT AND CONTENT FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

### **A. Cover Sheet**

### **B. Abstract or Summary**

If the EA is significant in length, a 1-2 page executive summary of important issues and major findings should be prepared. The summary should stand alone, and not require the reading of the entire EA to understand the conclusions outlined in it. Specific mitigation measures for the proposed action should also be included.

### **C. Table of Contents**

The EA must include a table of contents following the summary. (See Appendix 2)

### **D. Purpose and Need**

Usually the first chapter or section of an EA is titled Purpose and Need or Introduction. This section briefly outlines the issues or problems requiring action and/or what the proposed action is intended to accomplish. Explain where, how and when you want to do the project. The EA must discuss the Federal/NPS/BLRI laws, regulations, and guidelines that permit the granting of the proposed action and govern the proposed action.

### **E. Alternatives, including the Proposed Action**

EA's must fully describe the proposed action, No Action and a range or reasonable alternatives which met objectives as laid out in the purpose section, and reduce or eliminate impacts to important environmental resources.

- 1. Range of Alternatives** – Normally, an EA should fully analyze a range of reasonable alternatives. However, if the applicant and Parkway Planning Staff find no reasonable alternatives exist and all impacts of the proposed action are insignificant, the EA may instead include a discussion of alternatives considered but rejected, and documentation supporting why these were rejected. For example: location infeasible for technical, economic or environmental reasons. In this case, the EA would only analyze the proposed action and No Action alternatives.
- 2. Costs and Benefits** – If a cost-benefit or other economic report has been completed, and relative costs and/or benefits of alternatives will be used in making decisions between alternatives in an EA, relevant information should be summarized in the EA or the cost-benefit analysis should be attached as an appendix.

3. **No Action Alternative** – the impacts of the No Action alternative are important for comparison purposes, and must be part of any EA. This is critical in determining significance of impacts.
4. **Proposed Action Alternative** – describe in detail, including all connected actions, mitigation and monitoring activities for the proposed action. Describe what would happen on-the-ground, in-the-ground, under-the-ground, on-the-water, in-the-water, under-the-water, in-the-air activities would take place if the proposed action were implemented. Discuss the staging areas, construction sequence, borrow/dump sites, number and species of trees to be removed, etc., in the proposed action.

## **F. Affected Environment**

Information about the existing environment relevant to understanding the impact of the proposed action, No Action or other alternatives must appear in the EA. Succinctly describe the environment of the area(s) to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration. The descriptions should be no longer than is necessary to understand the effects of the alternatives.

Describe the relevant, affected environmental and socioeconomic resources, as they now exist. Describe what **is**, not what **would be**. Organize the resources in general categories: natural resources, cultural resources, socio-economic resources, and scenic resources, with individual resources under the four categories as follows:

### **1. Natural Resources**

- Threatened and endangered plants and animals
- Wetlands, riparian areas and floodplains
- Wildlife and their habitat
- Geology, soils and soil erosion
- Topography
- Air quality
- Groundwater quality
- Surface waters
- Noise level
- Prime and unique farmlands

### **2. Cultural Resources**

- Historic Parkway landscape setting
- Other Historic sites and features
- Archeological resources
- Ethnographic resources

### **3. Socio-economic**

- Land use/change in land use (including recreational activities)
- Visitor safety
- Quality of life

#### **4. Scenic Resources**

View area landscape characterization  
Viewshed/Scenic Quality  
Visual intrusions

### **G. Impacts**

An EA, which results in the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI), must provide adequate support for the statement that no significant impacts are likely if a proposed action is implemented. Impacts must be presented in the right context and compared to impacts of ongoing activities (i.e. impact of No Action).

Summarize the impact that each alternative has on significant Parkway resources in an objective manner with sufficient detail to meaningfully and accurately quantify the magnitude of implementing that alternative. Analysis of each resource concern should honestly evaluate noticeable long-term (operations and maintenance) or short-term (construction and rehabilitation) effects on change in land use, wetlands, prime or unique agricultural lands, visual/viewshed, air quality, groundwater quality, noise levels, wildlife and their habitat, potential for establishment of exotic plant species, introduction of toxic substances, rare and endangered plants and animals and archeological resources.

This section should include discussions of:

- a.** Direct impacts and their significance, which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.
- b.** Secondary impacts and their significance, which are caused by the action and are later in time, but are still reasonably foreseeable. These may include growth inducing impacts and other impacts related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related impacts on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems and viewsheds.
- c.** Cumulative impacts and their significance, which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. When analyzing the proposed action, you must consider actions that result as a direct or indirect consequence of the proposal, e.g., cumulative actions.

### **H. Mitigations**

Resource mitigation actions to protect or restore Parkway resources that would be impacted, including natural, cultural and visual, must be addressed in the EA including the discussion of the likelihood of the long-term success of the proposed mitigation. Identify monitoring activities that would be necessary to ensure that the mitigation measures are implemented and effective.

Even if it appears no impacts to resources analyzed in the EA have the potential to be significant, there still may be mitigation measures that the National Park Service would like to adopt to reduce impacts. (See Appendix 3 – Preliminary Replanting List)

The applicant will be expected at a minimum to follow construction guidelines specific to their project and utilize all mitigating measures suggested by state and federal regulatory agencies to alleviate the impact caused by construction within the ROW. All mitigating measures recommended by the archeologist or SHPO will be incorporated into the project.

## **I. Consultation and Coordination**

Persons, organizations and agencies contacted for information, which assisted in identifying important issues, developing alternatives or analyzing impacts should be listed in this section.

Any documentation, including phone consultations, indicating final compliance with applicable laws or regulations should be appendixes to the EA. Any applicable local, state or federal permits that the applicant is required to have should be listed here as well as the permit placed in an appendix to the EA.

Scoping or other public involvement efforts should also be detailed, and a brief summary of major issues included.

## **J. List of Preparers**

A list of preparers and their qualifications is required in the EA.

## **K. Bibliography**

A bibliography, glossary of terms and acronyms and appendixes should be part of the EA.

## **L. Maps, drawings, photographs, appendices, etc.**

Provide any drawings, maps, photographs, exhibits, etc. in the EA. These should be of the overall area (USGS Quad Sheet), proposed project area, proposed site plans, surveys and construction documents. Any detailed plan that is required before actual work may begin should be included, such as an erosion and sedimentation control plan, environmental protection and impact monitoring plan, etc. The permittee will be required to provide an AutoCAD plat and legal description for inclusion in the ROW permit.

## **EA REVIEW**

After the applicant has prepared the Environmental Assessment, it should be sent in to the Landscape Architect/ROW Specialist for review/comment by the Blue Ridge Parkway Resource Planning Staff. The planning staff will review the entire document for content and to determine whether or not all impacts, alternatives or mitigation measures, etc., are adequately discussed in the environmental assessment. If there are any changes, missing information/documentation or new alternatives presented by the planning staff, the applicant will need to amend the EA or incorporate them into the final document.

## **PUBLIC REVIEW**

A 30-day public review is required of all environmental assessments for projects planned on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Once the EA is complete and meets NPS standards, the applicant will work with Parkway Planning Staff to initiate public review of the document in the following ways:

- News release sent to local newspapers, radio and television stations, and posted on Parkway Internet Web Page to announce the availability of EA for public review and comment, or,
- News release distribution same as above with public meeting(s) to be conducted by applicant to discuss proposed project and environmental analysis/impacts.

## **FINAL EA/FONSI**

After the Environmental Assessment has been approved and it is determined that all substantive issues are covered adequately, and that there will be no potential for significant impacts if the proposed action is initiated, then the Blue Ridge Parkway Environmental Compliance Specialist will prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The Environmental Compliance Specialist will then send the FONSI and Final EA to the NPS Southeast Field Office for approval by the Regional Director. This approval **must** be granted before any NPS permit will be issued. The timeframe for approval can range from 45 days – 90 days.

After the park receives the Letter of Concurrence approving the FONSI, the Landscape Architect/ROW Specialist will notify the applicant and begin the process of issuing the Right-of-Way permit.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

Because of a potential for archeological resources in the areas of new rights-of-way, the applicant must have a professional archeologist field survey the proposed site. This archeologist must obtain, complete and submit to the National Park Service authorities listed below an ARPA permit application before any work can begin. This permit application will detail the plan of survey to be used and those reporting requirements called for by the National Park Service. The Blue Ridge Parkway will send a copy of this permit application to the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer to determine any cultural properties listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or any other concerns they may have.



The archeological survey may begin only when the approved ARPA permit is received and a copy sent to the Blue Ridge Parkway Cultural Resource Specialist, Allen Hess and can be reached at 828/271-4779 ext. 211. The address for information on an ARPA permit is:

Chief John Ehrenhard  
Southeast Archeological Center  
Post Office Box 2416  
Tallahassee, Florida 32316

The applicant will be responsible for funding the archeological survey and evaluation. If cultural resources are identified and determined significant, then mitigation measures such as project realignment or data recovery will be funded and conducted with the approval of the NPS and SHPO.

All mitigating measures recommended by the archeologist or SHPO will be incorporated into the project. Thus, no archeological resources or cultural properties should be impacted by ROW development. If, however, cultural elements are discovered during construction activities, the applicant will be required to stop activities and contact the Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, so that appropriate compliance measures can be taken.

All new rights-of-way will be surveyed by a qualified biologist for rare and endangered plants and animals. In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended, the ROW applicant will consult with the appropriate U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Field Office to determine the project's effect to federally listed plants and animals.

Should rare species occur at or in close proximity to the proposed project area, the ROW route location will be selected in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In keeping with NPS policy, ROW's will also be placed to avoid impact to state-listed plants or animals. The applicant will need to contact the state Natural Heritage Program to determine if any state listed species were affected by the proposed ROW development, and if so, then the state Natural Heritage Program would be consulted and asked for guidance on route selection.

In accordance with Executive Order 11988 and 11990 (Floodplain Management and Wetland Protection), the applicant will be required to consult with the appropriate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Field Office to determine if the proposed project has an effect on lands classified as wetlands.

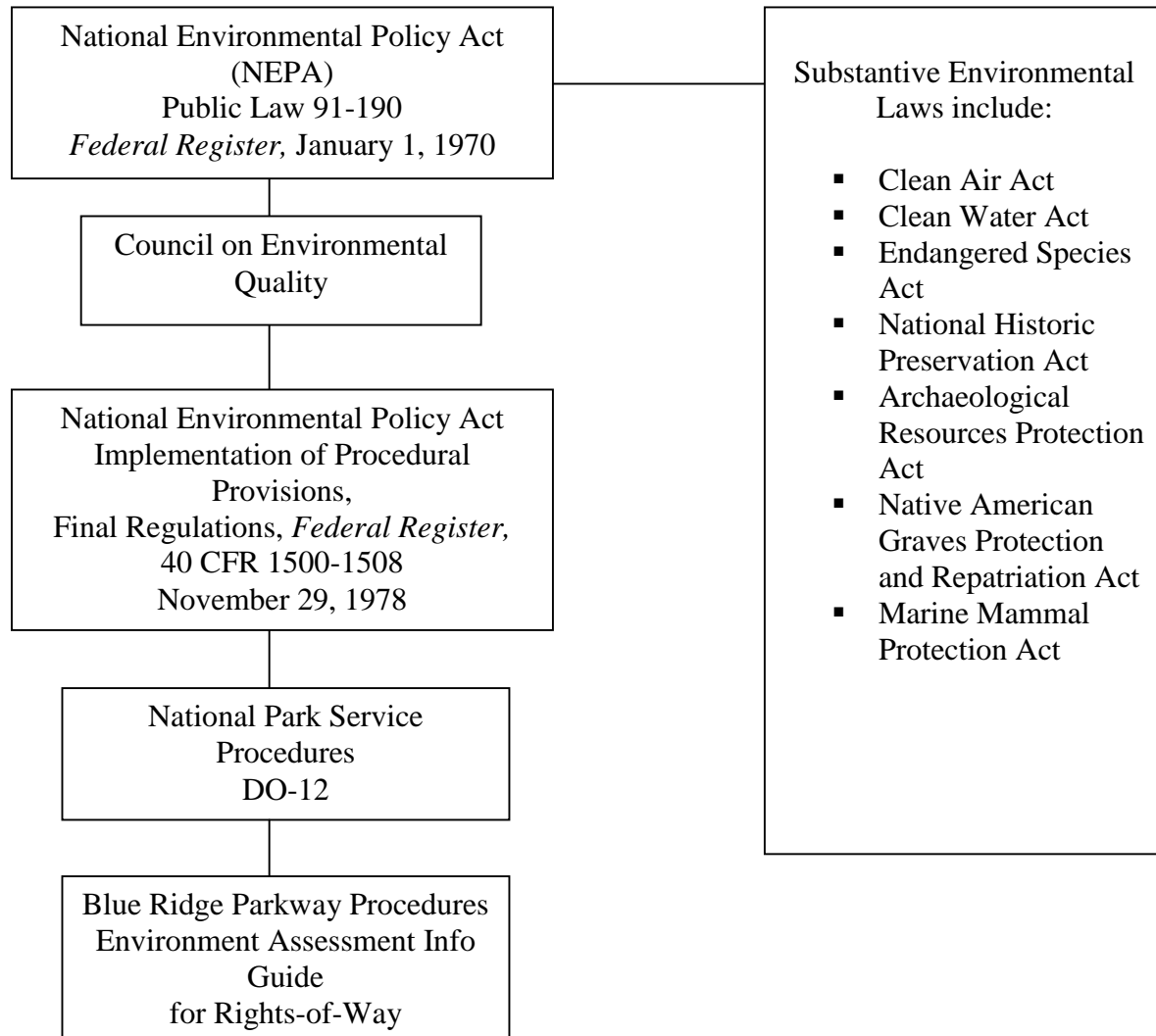
In keeping with the intent of the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1984, the Natural Resource Conservation Service in the county in which the project will occur should be contacted to determine if any agricultural lands may be involved in the construction of the ROW, to determine the effect of important (prime or unique) farmland soils.

In accordance with the Clean Water Act (Sections 401 and 404), the applicant will be required to consult with the appropriate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Field Office to determine the effects of the proposed project on water resources.

In accordance with Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations), the applicant must specifically analyze and evaluate the impact of the proposal on minority and low-income populations and communities.

Addresses for state, local and federal agencies within your project area can be found on the Internet or in the phone book. All consultation must be documented as an appendix in the EA.

## Understanding the National Environmental Policy Act



## **Appendix 1**

### **Blue Ridge Parkway Environmental Screening Form**

## Environmental Screening Form

### Project Description/Project ID/Location:

Project ID:

MP:

District:

Section:

### Mandatory Criteria (A-N). Would the proposal, if implemented:

	Yes	No	Data Needed To Determine
A. Have material adverse effects on public health or safety?			
B. Have adverse effects on such unique characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; or ecological significant or critical areas, including those listed on the National Register of Natural Landmarks?			
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects?			
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?			
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?			
F. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?			
G. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?			
H. Have adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?			

	Yes	No	Data Needed To Determine
I. Require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11900 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?			
J. Threaten to violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?			
K. Involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA sec. 102(2)(E))?			
L. Have a disproportionate, significant adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?			
M. Restrict access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?			
N. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of federally listed noxious weeds (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act)?			
O. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of non-native invasive species, or actions that may promote the introduction, growth or expansion of the range of non-native invasive species (EO 13112)?			
P. Require a permit from a federal, state or local agency to proceed, unless the agency from whom the permit is required agrees a CE is appropriate?			
Q. Have the potential for significant impact as indicated by a federal, state or local agency or Indian Tribe?			
R. Have the potential to be controversial because of disagreement over possible environmental effects?			
S. Have the potential to violate the NPS Organic Act by impairing park resources or values?			

**Tailor the following to meet individual park unit/project needs. Are any measurable impacts possible on the following categories relating to physical, natural, or cultural resources?**

	Yes	No	Data Needed To Determine
A. Geological resources- soils, bedrock, streambeds, etc.?			
B. From geohazards?			
C. Air quality, traffic, or from noise?			
D. Water quality or quantity?			
E. Streamflow characteristics?			
F. Marine or estuarine resources?			
G. Floodplains or wetlands?			
H. Land use, including occupancy, income, values, ownership, type of use?			
I. Rare or unusual vegetation – old growth timber, riparian, alpine?			
J. Species of special concern (plant or animal; state or federal listed or proposed for listing) or their habitat?			
K. Unique ecosystems, biosphere reserves, World Heritage sites?			
L. Unique or important wildlife or wildlife habitat?			
M. Unique or important fish or fish habitat?			
N. Introduce or promote non-native species(plant or animal)?			
O. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.?			
P. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources?			
Q. Cultural resources, cultural landscape, sacred sites, etc.?			

	Yes	No	Data Needed To Determine
R. Socioeconomics, including employment, occupation income changes, tax base, infrastructure, etc.?			
S. Minority and low-income populations, ethnography, size, migration patterns, etc.?			
T. Energy Resources?			
U. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies?			
V. Resource, including energy, conservation potential?			
W. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.?			
X. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity?			
Y. Other important environmental resources?			

**Please answer the following questions:**

1. Are the personnel preparing this form familiar with the site, and/or has a site visit been conducted? (Attach additional pages noting when site visit took place, staff attending, etc.)
2. Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed? (Attach additional pages detailing the consultation, including the name, date and summary of comments from other agency or tribal contacts).



## Instructions

When you have completed a site visit (or if staff are familiar with the specifics of the site) and consultation with affected agencies and/or tribes, and if the answers in the checklist above are all “no,” you may proceed to the categorical exclusion form if the action is described in section 3-4 of DO-12. If any answers in the checklist are “yes” or “data needed to determine,” or if the action is not described in section 3-4, prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Attach maps, notes of site visits, agency consultation, relevant data or reports, the categorical exclusion form or other relevant information to this form to begin the statutory/administrative record file.

### Signatory

In signing this form, you are saying you have completed a site visit or are familiar with the specifics of the site, have consulted with affected agencies and tribes, and that the answers to the questions posed in the checklist are, to the best of your knowledge, correct.

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Environmental Compliance Specialist

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Date

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Chief, Resource Planning and Professional Services

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Date

## **Appendix 2**

### **Example Table of Contents for EA**

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## **Appendix 3**

### **Preliminary Replanting List**

## **Preliminary Replanting List**

This draft document contains a list of suggested plant material for the entire 469-mile length of the Blue Ridge Parkway and should not be considered complete or specific to all planting locations and elevations. All species of vegetation that may be recommended for planting on park lands should be native to the area they are to be planted. Consult with local Landscape Architects or Horticulturists, or a Biologist for specific species and cultivars and their suitability for consideration at a specific site.

### **Trees To Consider:**

#### **Deciduous**

Oaks (*Quercus* sp.)- Chestnut, White, and Red Oaks

Hickory (*Carya* sp.)

Maples (*Acer* sp.) - Red Maple

Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*)

White Ash (*Fraxinus Americana*)

Birch (*Betula* sp.)

Sycamore (*Platanus* sp.).

Redbud (*Cercis Canadensis*)

Dogwood (*Cornus* sp.)

#### **Evergreen**

Hemlock (*Tsuga* sp.)

Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

Virginia Pine (*Pinus Virginiana*)

### **Shrubs To Consider**

Rhododendron (*Rhododendron* sp.)

Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)

Flame Azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*)

Pinxter Azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*)

Arrow wood Viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*)

Native Grasses And Wildflowers

## **Appendix 4**

### **Environmental Assessment Topic Questions**

## **Environmental Assessment Topic Questions**

The following issues should be considered in detail:

### **Land Disturbance**

- How much surface area will be cleared and denuded of vegetation?
- How much excavation will be necessary for utilities, footings, bore pits, etc.?
- Will there be any cut and fill? If so, how many cubic yards are required to construct a standard cross section; would proposed cut/fill slopes be conducive to allowing natural regeneration?
- Where will cut materials be deposited (both temporarily and permanently)?
- Where will fill materials be collected? How will they be “stored?”

### **Land Use**

- What changes will occur in land use?
- Do prime and unique farmlands occur within the project area?
- How will the project site be accessed for construction, maintenance, and repair activities? What frequency is maintenance required?
- Will a staging area be required within NPS boundaries? What type materials/equipment will be stored and for how long?

### **Soils**

- Is an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan required by the State? What erosion control actions will be taken?
- Will disturbance be of highly erodible soils, bedrock, streambeds, or geologic hazards?
- How will stormwater runoff be changed? (Increased/Directed)

### **Vegetation**

- How many trees and what species over six (6) inches diameter at breast height (DBH) are to be impacted? Describe plans for regeneration/replanting the site (include tree/shrub species and grass mixes).
- Does the project impact any areas in, adjacent to habitat, or within migratory routes for rare, threatened, or endangered plants (including State-listed species or State species of concern in this category)?
- What potential is there for the establishment of exotic plant species within disturbed areas created by this project (e.g., what exotics occur outside the project area that may move into the site)?
- Is the project site a unique plant community or Natural Heritage Area (e.g., highland bald, spruce/fir, old growth, hemlock forest, etc.)?
- Is this project located in an area where restoration of exact genetic material is required?

- Does the project impact current or future biodiversity or species composition?

### **Wildlife**

- Does the project impact habitat for existing wildlife?
- Does the project impact any areas in, adjacent to, or within migratory routes for rare, threatened, or endangered animals (including State-listed species or State species of concern in this category)?
- Are trees used for nesting being removed?
- Is the percentage of forest canopy changing?
- Is forest fragmentation occurring?
- How are small animals, such as salamanders impacted? Are openings being created through which salamanders or other small mammals cannot pass (e.g., meadows, road widening, etc.)?
- Does the project impact current or future biodiversity or species composition?

### **Water resources**

- Do ephemeral, non-ephemeral streams, wetlands, or riparian zones occur within the project area?
- Does the project propose altering stream courses, surface or ground water flow or quantity?
- Does the project propose filling wetlands or stream courses?
- What U.S. Army Corps of Engineer permits are required?
- Will there be eutrophication of existing waters?
- Will the project impact drinking water supplies?
- Will the project use water consumptively; is water needed for construction activities; is water needed to maintain constant temperatures for equipment or materials? If so, where will water be obtained?
- Will the project alter surface or ground water quality?
- Is the project located in an identified floodplain?
- Does the project involve structures, fill, or discharge of dredged materials into navigable waters?

### **Air Quality**

- What impacts will there be to air quality (temporary and permanent)?
- Is open burning needed during pre- or post construction?
- What permits are required?

### **Noise Levels**

- What increases in noise levels will the project bring (temporary and permanent)?



## **Visual Environment**

Visual resources are easy to talk about but difficult to define. For the purposes of looking at individual and cumulative effects, the following list should be used to begin examination:

- Is the project area visible from the Parkway?
- What affect will the proposal have on the historic scene?
- Will implementation of the project cause the area to be seen from the Parkway?
- Will improvements be seen from the Parkway?
- Will the project have a direct relationship of increasing development to lands in critical viewshed of the Parkway?
- Do improvements introduce new visual elements to the Parkway that are not in keeping with visual character of the Parkway; i.e., solid concrete headwalls, metal culvert headwalls, galvanized guardrail, etc.?
- Are there management strategies that will effect visual resources, such as striping, signing, vegetation clearing, etc.?

## **Socio-Economic Impacts**

- Will temporary or permanent jobs be created?
- Will temporary or permanent changes in standard of living occur?
- What safety or health issues are being addressed by this project?
- Change existing traffic flow/circulation
- Change the amount of waste disposal
- Affect minority or low income populations
- Involve or impact prime farmland, grazing
- Affect energy resources including conservation

## **Miscellaneous**

- Will any toxic substances or pesticides be introduced into the environment?
- What is the effect of bituminous materials? Is the current asphalt going to be reused, or will an additional layer be placed on existing asphalt?
- Does the project involve a wilderness or wilderness study area?
- Alter available visitor services or activities (parking, trails, recreation, or disabled access)
- Involve or affect wild or scenic rivers
- Change or add light sources or light pollution
- Involve the use, handling, storage, disposal, discharge of hazardous or toxic substances

- Add or remove safety or public health threats
- Involve American Indian Religious Use
- Require federal, state, or local permits
- Affect other agencies, tribal land use plans or policies

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